

AN
ADDRESS
DELIVERED BEFORE
THE SOCIETY OF ALUMNI
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA,

JULY 1, 1869,

BY WM. C. RIVES, JR.

"Multæ dies, varique labor mutabilis ævi
Retulit in melius; multos alterna revisens
Lusit et in solido rursus fortuna locavit."—VIRGIL.

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ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN :

IN choosing me as your representative on this occasion, you have taken no thought of my inexperience in the performance of such duty as you have assigned me. You have looked only to my connection with one whose death, a short time before your last anniversary, called forth many expressions of sorrow. Him you recalled, as perhaps you had often heard him in other days, in the act of counselling and animating the people of Virginia in their primary assemblies. Him you remembered by a long career of service, in State or National Legislature, or as the representative of his country in a foreign land, or by the consecration of his declining years to the task of preparing an adequate memorial of the labours of one of the greatest of the organizers and early administrators of the government. It may be that, by a nearer association, his form seemed to you to resume a once familiar place among the guardians of this Institution, or these walls to send back to you the accents of his discourse before your

Society.* These remembrances, these associations, have led you to devolve this duty on me—the inheritor of his name—and unwilling to seem insensible to an act of kindness that long absence and remoteness and habitual silence on my part, render the more generous on yours, I bring you, in grateful acknowledgment, the tribute of my voice.

The welfare of this University and of your Society, and indeed of Science, Literature and Education in this Commonwealth are so inextricably interwoven with the welfare of the State, and the condition of the State has been so strangely altered, that no subject seems to me more worthy to engage your thought, and more appropriate to the occasion, than the relation of recent changes to the interests and the duties of the people of Virginia.

The theme, I am aware, is obvious and familiar, but a poet of consummate genius tells us—

“To know
That which before us lies in daily life
Is the prime wisdom.”

I am aware, also, that a topic so easily brought within the sphere of party politics, though by no means necessarily belonging to it, should be treated with reserve, especially on a day dedicated to a renewal of the pleasing associations of academic life; and knowing this, it shall be my aim to give no

* See “Discourse on the uses and importance of History” delivered by Hon. Wm. C. Rives before the Society of Alumni of the University of Virginia.

cause of offence to any political convictions, while, at the same time, I shall endeavour to follow the light of that cheerful and hopeful philosophy which befits the occasion, and without whose guidance it will be impossible to surmount the sorrows of the past and overcome the trials of the future.

Nor, gentlemen, can a consideration of the interests of Virginia be a matter of indifference to you, from whatever region of this wide empire you may come. Depressed as the fortunes of Virginia are, her influence is yet felt not only in adjoining States, but in the central seat of American Commerce; on the Mississippi, on the Gulf, on the far off Pacific shore. Her power, though reduced, is yet co-extensive with the limits of the Republic; for many hearts, in every part of the Republic, are bound to her by the ties of ancestry and memory, and still beat with emotion at the mention of her name.

On the threshold of this enquiry, a recent change renders necessary a definition of the term Virginia once employed to comprehend a domain stretching from ocean to ocean, and though subsequently restricted, continuing to embrace a vast territory won by the enterprise and valour of the sons of Virginia, until that territory was surrendered as a willing gift to freedom and to union. For the purposes of to-day, let there be no farther cession. Let there be no East and no West Virginia. Whether there shall be political re-union or not

between these regions, all antagonism between them is forever at an end. Every day is strengthening the bonds of mutual interest which unite them, and bringing them into more intimate and friendly communion. The Alleghanies and the Blue Ridge have ceased to exist as barriers between them. The distant banks of tide water shall echo this evening to the same shrill whistle—to the same thundering wheels—which roused the deer this morning from his dewy couch among the western mountains. By Virginia, then, let us designate not Virginia as limited by an unfamiliar boundary, not Virginia as shorn of one-third of her territory and her population, but Virginia in the integrity of 1860, bathed on the north and east by the waters of the Potomac, the Chesapeake, the Atlantic, bounded on the west by the Cumberland mountains and the sinuous Ohio, resting her broad base on the States of North Carolina and Tennessee, and shooting upward in towering pinnacle to the latitude of the city of New York.

The change in the condition of Virginia that most occupies public attention is the change in her political relations; but this change, in accordance with my pledged reserve, I shall notice only with a few general reflections in which I believe all men who have at heart the welfare of Virginia will concur.

The re-organization of Legislative, Executive and Judicial authority by a fair expression of the will

of the people, is an object so essential to the interests of Virginia, that all who wish for the diffusion of general prosperity will rejoice to see its consummation. It is an end of far greater importance than complete admission to Federal representation. Desirable as that privilege is, the refusal of it up to this time has been attended with the compensating advantage of turning much of the talent of Virginia from its former devotion to Federal politics to the more useful field of home pursuits. Much as the still unsettled political condition is to be regretted, it should not be forgotten that the condition is transient, and that whether the tendency of the country at large be to a consolidated democracy or to a qualified recognition of the so called rights of the States, Virginia will soon be remitted to the same measure of political privilege which shall be enjoyed by the most favored of her sister States. Until that time come, let the thought and employment of her people continue exclusively at home. In her isolation and retirement, Virginia shall not be forgotten, and her image, like the unseen images of the Roman patriots, shall be the more lustrous because withdrawn from observation.*

Another important change occurring as a consequence of the war, is the change affecting the property of the inhabitants of the State. It is but four years since the scene which offered itself to

* "*Eo ipso præfulgebant quod imagines eorum non viscebantur.*"

the traveller through Virginia was such as to cause the most hopeful spirit to sink under a weight of discouragement and despondency. On the other side of your mountains, fences, barns, mills, dwellings had been burned. Bridges had been destroyed and highways rendered impassable. No fields held out the promise of abundance. No cattle grazed upon a thousand hills. Your valley,—the garden of America by the decree of Providence,—had been made a desert by the decree of man. On this side, the same picture presented itself with added and peculiar features of desolation. From the railways built to bear to the markets of the world the fruits of industry, the iron had been torn, and lay by the side of its former bed, warped and twisted by fire. The river which welcomed to its bosom the first colonists of the country, forced its way to the sea over driven piles and shattered wrecks, while the deadly odours of recent combat still mingled with the breath of spring. The neighbouring heights were crowned with forts, and far over the hills might be traced the winding lines of intrenchment. Broad levels of fertile land, stretching from the river, were overgrown with weeds, and the abodes of open handed and graceful hospitality, if not destroyed, afforded a melancholy refuge to a sick soldiery or a race just freed from bondage. At the head of the navigation of the river, your capitol had been swept by a disastrous conflagration. Your other towns lay shat-

tered and half ruined, and one, still "black from the miner's blast," had just heard the last note of expiring war. These visible marks of desolation gave an inadequate idea of the loss sustained. That large mass of what was once property, represented by the stock of incorporated companies, and by confederate, state, county, municipal and individual obligations, was involved in the general ruin of a lost cause.

And yet overwhelming as these varied losses seemed when they were first contemplated, they have been attended with but few instances of that suffering for the necessities of life which is common, and ever must prevail, in the crowded and, as they are generally esteemed, prosperous centres of population. Occasioning, as they still do, much of perplexity and inconvenience, their sum bears but a small proportion to the wealth of the State which was not destroyed, and a thoughtful survey of this apparent field of utter ruin will bring the conviction that as out of the "nettle danger" may be plucked "the flower safety," so from the impoverishment of the Commonwealth, may soon be developed the fruit of a hitherto unknown prosperity. Great as were the interests destroyed by war, the chief wealth of Virginia continued to exist after the war, in the productive energies of her wide fields and her surviving population. A fertile soil under a benign sky, remained unconfiscated, and was ready to bless with bountiful return the efforts

of all who were willing and able to labour. The poverty, though general, was not extreme or abject, and property enough was left to foster the spirit of economy, to encourage exertion, to stimulate the sentiment of self-reliance. Necessity brought, and still brings much land into the market, but enough and more than enough remained and will remain to the native inhabitant to be made more productive, with careful culture, than the whole of the original possession. The subdivision of an estate, without impairing the resources of the owner, will thus add to the wealth of the State.

The most serious loss of wealth to Virginia was the loss of so much of the flower of her youth and of her vigorous manhood. But this loss, too, shall soon be repaired by the natural growth of the population already within the State and by accessions from without; and in the contemplation of its moral aspect, consoling thoughts shall not refuse to assuage the bitterness of sorrow with which the fate of the fallen sons of Virginia has been regarded. They have perished indeed in a vain attempt. The cause they fought for has been lost. I have nothing to say of its merits or its demerits. Such discussion, fruitless everywhere, would especially contravene the purposes for which we meet. But there is a justice—there is a tribute to the dead—which their generous adversaries will not withhold. Exposed as they were on the frontier, in an especial manner, to the obvious calamities of war, there was much

to commend to them the policy of a halting neutrality; but they chose, in the hour of trial, not to study the philosophy of success, not to count the cost, not to listen to the voice of what they thought "a reptile prudence." They have laid down their lives as the penalty of their decision. No monuments of bronze or marble shall be lifted to the skies to display to posterity, with the emblems of mortality, the record of their achievements. They shall sleep in scattered, and it may be in unmarked graves, but they shall not sleep a prey to forgetfulness. The rivers of Virginia, in ceaseless flow, shall murmur their requiem, her everlasting hills shall awake the remembrance of their unselfishness, their valour, their devotion, and History shall write as their epitaph, not on tables of stone, but on the minds and hearts of generations yet unborn, that they were true to their convictions, their affections, and their God.

In the discussion of losses of property, the great change affecting the condition of the negro population of the State, is often referred to. This change is so peculiar in its character that it deserves to be considered briefly in some of its relations to the past as well as to the future. A chapter in the history of opinion and action relating to the African slave trade and the system of African slavery, has not received that general attention which it merits. It is easy to recall its leading facts. The first cargo of African slaves was brought to this,

at that time infant, colony in the year 1620. The traffic soon began to excite the avarice of European merchants, and the commercial interest of the towns of Liverpool and Bristol was early and eager to share its profit. No sense of its iniquity seems to have been aroused in England until it had flourished for more than one hundred and fifty years. The British government was so insensible of its immorality that in 1748, in a negotiation with Spain, it pressed successfully the recognition of a right to the exclusive privilege of supplying the Spanish colonies of America with slaves. It was not until near the close of the 18th century, that the sentiment of reprobation began to be aroused through the exertions of Clarkson, Wilberforce and others; and even then, so powerfully was the influence of the Liverpool and Bristol interest and of the Royal family exerted in opposition to any interference, that the zeal and eloquence of Wilberforce, though reinforced by the great arguments and authority of the premier—William Pitt—failed to carry measures of immediate suppression through parliament. Not until the first of January, 1808—several years after Pitt's death—did an act of parliament go into effect forbidding British subjects from engaging in the traffic.

A few years after the recognition of the Independence of the United States, the question of the slave trade was taken up in the Convention which formed the American Federal Constitution. The

year 1800 and the year 1808 were respectively proposed in that body as limitations of the term after which the importation of slaves into the country should be prohibited. The extension to the year 1808 was earnestly opposed by James Madison, of Virginia, and the debate which took place at this time was the occasion on which George Mason of Virginia denounced not only the traffic but the system of slavery, with the fiery eloquence that belonged to him. The representatives of Virginia, however, were overruled, and although the vote of Virginia was recorded against the extension, the year 1808 was fixed on instead of the earlier year proposed for the cessation of the trade.

If we trace the opinion and the action of Virginia, we shall find both far in advance of the opinion and the action of Great Britain and of the United States in regard to this question.

We shall find her people and her representative men speaking and acting upon it in terms not to be misunderstood. In 1774, the people in their primary assemblies in many counties of Virginia, express their opposition to the importation of slaves in language of indignant remonstrance. At the meeting called for this purpose in the county of Fairfax, George Washington presides. During the same year a Convention is held at Williamsburg in the month of August, and a resolution is adopted protesting against importation and pledging the members of the Convention to abstain from the

purchase of imported slaves. In a letter from the Father of this Institution to the same body, we observe that he anticipates his memorable protest in the original draft of the declaration of independence, denounces, in language of burning eloquence, the exercise of the royal prerogative to annul the repeated attempts of the colony of Virginia to prohibit the introduction of slaves, and affirms it as the most earnest object of desire on the part of the people to rid themselves forever of the system of slavery. In the general Congress held at Philadelphia in the autumn of the same year, we find the same sentiments expressed, and to articles of agreement binding the members to an immediate, complete and perpetual discontinuance of the slave trade and to all intercourse of business with those concerned in it, we witness the signatures, on the part of Virginia, of Peyton Randolph, President of the Convention, of Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, Jr., Benjamin Harrison, George Washington, Richard Bland and Edmund Pendleton. As a further evidence of the early sentiment of Virginia, it may be mentioned that her Legislature found time in the year 1777, amid the excitement and trial of the Revolutionary war, to pass an act prohibiting the traffic. Proof of the earnest wish of all the great representative men of Virginia of the Revolutionary era not only to limit but to extirpate slavery, might be expanded into volumes. In the language of a high authority, they listened

with attention and respect to all the schemes for the purpose that wisdom or ingenuity could devise.*

But the problem was too difficult for their great powers, and they passed from the stage of human action leaving its solution to their descendants.

We may still see among us the venerable form of a man bound no less by the ties of familiar and confidential intercourse than by the ties of blood to the Father of this Institution, and still learn from his lips how deeply he was imbued with the opinions of his great ancestor in relation to this subject, and how earnestly he strove in early manhood,—and with what zealous co-operation on the part of Virginian associates of whom some are yet among the living,—to give those opinions effect by the measure of gradual emancipation.† But he failed in 1833 in an undertaking more arduous than that which had baffled the men of the Revolutionary era, because the increase of the slave population and the rising storm of political excitement added circumstances of greater difficulty.

It is foreign to my purpose, as it would be inappropriate to the occasion, to trace further the history of opinion and action in relation to this question; but it may safely be affirmed that the sentiments of the early patriots of Virginia on this subject, continued to be entertained by many of the Virginians who in the late war struck the

* Hon. B. W. Leigh.

† Thomas Jefferson Randolph, Esq.

fiercest blows against Federal authority. It is common to ascribe the resistance to national authority which burst forth on the soil of Virginia to the inspiration of slavery; but to seek an explanation of the fact in that source, is to overlook a sentiment which, whether right or wrong, has ever exerted and will ever continue to exert a controlling influence over the human heart. Whatever may be the just claims and influence of a comprehensive patriotism, love of country is not a sentiment that is communicated to every breast from a remote boundary and reaches last of all the narrow concerns of State, of county, of parish, of neighborhood, of family. "To be attached to the subdivision," says Edmund Burke, "to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country and to mankind."

I do not propose to consider whether the principle laid down by the orator-philosopher of England be a principle which ought to guide human action or not, but it will explain the motive of resistance, and an illustration of its operation may be found in an incident marking the first step in the military career of a man than whom has existed no fitter embodiment of the spirit of Virginia at the outbreak of the late war. "What flag are we going to fight under—the Palmetto or what?" said a friend to Ashby, as the latter was about to draw

his sword. "HERE," replied Ashby, raising his hat and taking from it the flag of Virginia newly painted by his own order and for his own purpose, "HERE is the flag, *I* intend to fight under!" Ingenuity might seek to establish some connection between the spirit of the answer and a sympathy with slavery; but a natural and just interpretation will see in it nothing but a conformity to the principle which Burke lays down, and trace to that source the inspiration which created the splendid incarnation of chivalry who ceased to electrify the whole country by his "admirable skill and audacity"* only when his heroic form was borne in a bloody shroud to your chapel, and thence consigned to rest in your cemetery.

Turn we now to the result arrived at after the lapse of nearly two hundred and fifty years from the time when the system of African slavery was first established on the soil of Virginia.

It is not for any man nor for any set of men to claim credit for the fulfilment of abolition. That object was professedly not the aim of one to whom the result is sometimes attributed. All men and all parties worked together for its consummation—many of them indeed unconsciously—as drops of water contribute to fill the rivers and rivers to swell the ocean. It is enough to know that the

* These words are the more significant from the fact that they were applied to Gen. Ashby by Major Gen. John C. Fremont U. S. A. in an official despatch informing the U. S. government of the progress of his campaign against Jackson's corps.

result has been reached at the cost of fearful suffering. It is enough to know that slavery no longer exists as an impenetrable wall to throw the shadow of a ruinous responsibility and of an exclusive odium on the sons of Virginia, and to repel the regard, esteem and interest of the nations foremost in progress and civilization. Well may Virginia,—the greatest of all sufferers by the existence of slavery, and the greatest of all gainers by its extinction,—as she contemplates the destruction of this barrier, originally erected not by herself but by others, in spite of her remonstrance and entreaty, look beyond the difficulties of the present moment to the dawning of a brighter day! Well may Virginia, as she thoughtfully surveys the unspeakable advantages that liberation will bring to her and more conspicuously reveal with each succeeding year to the end of time, thank God and take courage!

But it is not to be forgotten in the midst of this well founded rejoicing, that the abolition of slavery does not abolish the negro. The two races—white and black—are still side by side on the soil of Virginia, and each is charged with a duty to itself and a duty to its neighbour. The negro is to learn that freedom does not mean freedom from labour,—freedom from the constraining influence of temperance and other virtues. Liberty holds out to him higher rewards than have heretofore been within his reach,—the rewards of property, of education, of an im-

proved intellectual and moral condition; but she threatens him at the same time with a deeper abyss of degradation than any from which he has emerged, with a more pinching poverty, a more unutterable misery, a more loathsome death. His destiny formerly committed by a fearful responsibility to other hands, is now transferred to his own. It is involved in an obscurity which no human eye can penetrate. As he can receive no reinforcement from immigration, and must suffer from unfavorable circumstances attending his condition, it is easy to see that his relative if not his absolute numbers on the soil of Virginia, must rapidly diminish. His tendency is to occupy the warmer regions of the earth, whose climate is better suited to his nature and whose products more easily reward his toil. It may be that he shall find his way back to the land whence he was torn, and that Providence, overruling the ancient outrage of man for its own beneficent purpose, shall place in his hands the torch that is to illumine the hitherto impenetrable recesses of pagan darkness. Whatever the future of the negro, the white man should never forget his claims to a forbearing and generous treatment; the resistance of his kindly nature to insurrectionary appeal; the sudden withdrawal of the hand that long supplied him, without thought on his part, with shelter and food, with clothing and medicine; his immediate exposure, without property, without education, without pre-

paration of any kind, to the hardships and perils of the battle of life. It is not only unworthy of the race destined to rapid growth under favorable circumstances, to cherish a feeling of jealousy and antagonism towards the negro, but it is the duty of that race,—superior as it is in native endowment and in all the accidents of fortune,—to reach out to the weakness of its associate, the hand of friendly and charitable support.

In the destruction of slavery, the only barrier of a permanent nature to the movement of immigration hither, has been removed. The tide has not set in with expected quickness and force, but the delay in its progress is easily explained by transient causes. The undetermined political condition of the State, and not a little misrepresentation in regard to the disposition of its inhabitants, partly from delusion and partly from malevolence, have operated in a considerable degree to frighten away capital and its essential associate immigration. Another explanation may be found in the fact that the stream of foreign immigration has long been accustomed to flow to the homogeneous reservoir which it finds in the cities of the West, whence it is distributed over the wide area of neighbouring states and territories. Powerful combinations of capital, operating through numerous and active and long established agencies, still keep the current in its ancient channel.

But no adverse influences can long prevail over

the position and the advantages of Virginia. She is on the very margin of states already filled with overflowing population, and that population will not long continue to seek what is remote, when nature offers superior advantages in what is near. She offers to the immigrant farmer for widely varied culture, vast tracts of virgin soil or tracts susceptible of quick and easy and inexpensive renovation. She offers to the builder boundless forests of pine and oak and fir for the purposes of naval or land construction. She offers to the miner inexhaustible supplies of iron and coal and oil and salt, of copper and lead and zinc and other materials of his industry,—and these supplies not difficult of transportation to the markets of the world, but on the edge of highways already established by nature or by art. She offers to the manufacturer her countless waterfalls and swift descending streams, and to the merchant and the mariner her safe and capacious harbours and her far penetrating navigable bays and rivers. To all she offers a climate, neither enervating by the extreme of heat nor benumbing by excess of cold, but suited in temperate mildness to the highest development of the interdependent physical, intellectual and moral qualities of man. If a small portion of her domain be subject to malaria, drainage and culture place a remedy within human control; and if human energy fail, Providence, in its bounty, has caused the refreshing breezes of the ocean on the one side to fan the brow of sickness,

while on the other, it has struck the mountains with a mysterious wand and compelled them to pour forth waters in exhaustless streams and never changing properties, to heal all manner of disease. To the advantages of nature, she adds the advantages of social order, the means of education, the opportunities of public worship.

A few years will bring about mighty changes within your borders. The subdivided soil shall double its increase; the forest that to-day waves its gigantic arms in primeval solitude shall bow beneath the axeman's stroke; the mineral wealth that has been buried under mountains since the creation, shall be brought forth from its secret caverns and made subservient to the use of man. The waters shall no longer leap from rock to rock in idle play and roll their unused power to the sea. Your harbours rivers and bays shall no longer be unfrequented, but shall be whitened with unnumbered sail and resound to the pulsations of all conquering steam.

In the midst of this busy scene, will be found an element of the general society whose influence has not yet been considered.

Will the white population born and reared on the soil, still its principal owner, stimulated to exertion by the strongest motives that appeal to human energy, bound to the State by the memory of kindred and ancestral graves, and every tender and endearing association that can move the heart

of man,—will this population be submerged by the immigrant tide? Has it no distinctive part to act, no special duties to perform? Will it lose all its ancient characteristics?

An historian, himself a native of the colony of Virginia, writing more than one hundred and sixty years ago, in no unkind or censorious spirit reproached his countrymen with depending “altogether upon the liberality of nature without endeavoring to improve its gifts by art or industry,” and declared that “they sponged upon the blessings of a warm sun and a fruitful soil and almost grudge the pains of gathering in the bounties of the earth.” The testimony of Beverly, as well as the relative slowness of Virginia’s progress in wealth and population, contributed extensively to mould opinion in regard to the white inhabitants of the State.

An impression prevailed among the supporters of Federal authority before the late war, that any resistance on the part of these inhabitants would be quickly disposed of, and their conservatism produced an unfavorable estimate of their energy in the minds of their more hasty and impetuous southern brethren.

Disparagement not unfrequently found expression in the imputation to the Virginian of a willingness to rely on blood and ancestral fame rather than any merit of his own. The part of Virginia in the Revolutionary war of ’76, in the war with

Great Britain in 1812, in the war with a neighboring republic in 1846,—the labours and achievements of her soldiers and her statesmen in every crisis of the country's history, whether of war or peace, could not wholly be forgotten; but the stream of time had swept the great actions of the sons of Virginia, beyond the reach of general and habitual remembrance.

None realized,—not even the people of Virginia themselves,—the energy that lay dormant within the limits of the Commonwealth, until a position of neutrality in the late war became impossible. Excluding all consideration of causes and objects, and looking merely at the admirable and surprising display of effort by every State engaged in the conflict on either side, it will not be considered, in any place or by any party, exaggeration to ascribe to Virginia the highest manifestations and the most conspicuous type of energy that were exhibited during the progress of the war. I shall not dwell on details and need only refer you, in brief illustration, to one moment and to one man,—but him a man who cannot be dissociated from the followers into whom he poured and from whom he drew the ardour of his soul. Recall the moment when millions of expectant eyes were turned to see the beleaguered capital fall before the armies and the combinations of the Federal commander, and when, like a thunderbolt from a clear sky in an unobserved region of the heavens, there fell a

blow, from an unseen and at that time an almost unknown hand, to disturb and set back for years the fulfilment of the national programme. For a higher type of energy than him that dealt that blow, I know not where in the pages of history to look. I need not pronounce his name, for you have looked upon his fleeting form from this spot, when like a swift cloud borne on the Western breeze, he was gathering his lightning to burst into storm an hundred miles away. Your eyes have followed him to behold victory after victory,—aye and victory that seemed of startling impossibility,—light on his banners, until, amid the crowning effort of his genius, Heaven released him from his tireless labours and permitted him in vision beatific, ere death had set the final seal upon his brow, “to cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees.” *

An impartial and attentive observer cannot fail to discover evidence, in what has been accomplished in Virginia during the last four years, and accomplished too, under the pressure of impoverishment and political adversity, that the impulse given to the energy of her sons by war, has not ceased to act with the return of peace. That energy turned into peaceful channels with a promptness and has maintained itself with a steadiness alike worthy of remark.

* See the authentic and deeply interesting account of the last moments of Gen. Stonewall Jackson by his chaplain, the Rev. R. L. Dabney.

In the valley of Virginia, which four years ago presented a scene of devastation imperfectly portrayed already, you will now find, in rebuilt fences, barns, bridges, highways, mills and homesteads, and in fields dotted with the stacks of abundant harvest, or still waving joyfully with tassled maize, the mingled evidence of nature's bounty and of man's industry. From the mountains to the sea, many a goodly prospect, like the one around us, bears the marks of the same returning prosperity.

Consider the present condition of the railways which so lately seemed, with their destroyed bridges, stations, beds, equipment, to be involved in irreparable ruin. All of them are so reconstructed, re-equipped, and administered as to compare favorably with the highways of prosperous communities. Of the two that pass by the place where we now stand, one has reached out an arm to grasp the riches of the valley, and is pushing its main stem to further conquest; while the other, already burthened with heavier freights than it has ever carried, is piercing the mountains with resistless progress, and will soon bring by your doors the trade and travel of the west. The passenger on your eastern border may now, as never before, glide with uninterrupted comfort, through your principal cities, from the banks of the Potomac to the heart of Carolina.

A railway in excellent condition, extends from your capital through the richest tobacco country of

America, lays under contribution the fertile valley of the Yadkin, and brings to your ports the cotton of Georgia and Alabama, while still another has just reached for the first time the head of that magnificent river now destined no longer to roll a deserted tide past the historic town that saw the consummation of Independence. And as a concluding evidence of what has been done in this department of industry, I point you to the four hundred miles of re-established road extending from your ancient seaport,—the witness of a more active commerce than it has ever before looked on,—to the mountains of Tennessee. In the re-organization of this great road, bringing to an Atlantic port the mineral and agricultural wealth of your south western counties, stretching by its connections to the Mississippi, and aiming for and destined to reach the distant treasures of the Golden Gate, you may see what has been achieved by a young Virginian, who has carried into the pursuits of peace the same skilful energy that marked his career in war.*

Your shattered towns have repaired their ruin, and your capital has risen from its ashes in new beauty and solidity of structure.

If we turn from material interests to the higher interests of education, do we find that nothing has been accomplished in Virginia? Has this, our University, shown herself unworthy, by her recent

* Gen. William Mahone.

efforts, of the great conception, the arduous and protracted and anxious labours of her founder and of his associates? Is there no evidence to be found here of devotion to human advancement, in the fact that within four years after the close of a calamitous war, new professorships have been established to meet the need of instruction in those applications of science which the requirements of the age and the wasted resources of the State in an especial manner call for? Is the laboratory just completed here,—a laboratory which, in size, arrangement, convenience, and completeness of apparatus for scientific investigation, may fitly compare with the laboratories of the most famous universities,—worthy of no commendation? Have the corps of instructors here shown themselves unfit successors of those men who forty-four years ago brought their labour and renown from Europe to the service of the infant seminary? Have no recent contributions to sound learning proceeded hence? no words to show that the language of true science is the pure expression of common sense, and that a teacher may admirably fulfil his duties here and at the same time instruct and delight a wider public? Have the four hundred and fifty young men, so soon brought within the embrace of the University,

*For a sufficient, though not a complete, answer to these questions, it is only necessary to refer to Prof. Schele de Vere's "Studies in English," and to Prof. Mallet's "Lecture on Chemistry applied to the arts" delivered before the University of Virginia May 30, 1868.

at each of her late annual sessions shown themselves unmindful of the care of which they have been the object? Was there no motive for generous applause when we saw not a few of them three years ago, the smoke of battle scarce departed from their garments, with empty sleeves hanging from their breasts, in the act of receiving the testimonials of their successful effort to profit with the return of peace, by the opportunities of knowledge which they had lost in war? Can the testimonials themselves be said to be of but little value when we have seen young men who have earned them, bear off the highest honors in general competitive examinations before the most distinguished boards of medical science the whole country can produce?

I have dwelt with emphasis on the illustration afforded by this University that the people of Virginia, as fitly represented here, are not unmindful of the high interests of education, because, gentlemen, this is our University. But there are within the State other seats of learning whose extended and extending usefulness afford ample evidence of successful effort in the same direction. The exertion, the progress, we witness here, have been made at William and Mary, Hampden Sidney, Randolph Macon, The Military Institute, and Washington College where, with modest dignity, an illustrious soldier devotes his great and experienced faculties to the noblest employment that can engage them.

Time would fail me to bring before you the evidence that might be easily accumulated to show that in the interests of primary education, both for whites and blacks, the native white population of this State have not been backward in putting forth the energy they have exhibited in the pursuit of other objects. A noble zeal has also marked their care for the highest of all concerns—a religion that, without inclining to dogmatism or symbolism, fervently cherishes the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith.

Surely there is ground for the belief that a people from among whom have sprung such men,—a people whose ancient and whose recent record displays so much of high achievement in war and peace, possesses a permanency of type that will withstand a contact with any immigrant population though it be

“A multitude like which the populous north
Pour'd never from her frozen loins, to pass
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
Came like a deluge on the south.”

It is true that the people of Virginia must encounter new dangers and prepare for new duties in the altered circumstances which surround them. They are about to be brought into intimacy of communion with the great world of modern progress and civilization from which they have been kept by the misfortune of slavery, in comparative isolation. The startling phenomena of this age of

steam and electricity, of this age of triumph by the genius of man over the forces of nature, are about to be held up as never before to their near and wondering view. They are now to be called on to exert all their faculties in diversified fields of employment from which they have hitherto been largely excluded. If they would succeed in these new fields of effort, they must indulge no narrow prejudice—no prejudice that marks a stationary or a retrogressive people. They must not ask who or whence is the author of this new lesson, but they must weigh the lesson taught according to its merits. They must be prompt and earnest in engrafting into their habits the excellencies of method, of punctuality, of accuracy, of steadiness, of dispatch, which Washington and other eminent Virginians have carried to perfection, but which agricultural communities have not usually attained. If the cultivation of these virtues enable them to achieve success in the pursuit of material prosperity in the midst of an active and crowded competition, they must still continue on their guard against dangers from which an easy freedom was once their portion.

They must remember that all barbarisms are not extinct with the “barbarism of slavery” which so long monopolized rhetorical invective. They must remember that barbarisms still lurk in the lap of a boasted civilization, in the midst of an age of unparalleled material progress. They must beware of the barbarism of a perverse and demoralizing

literature. They must beware of the barbarism that would rob woman of her charms by thrusting her loveliness into the arena of political strife. They must beware of the barbarism that would summon the disembodied spirit from its mysterious abode at the call of a profane rap. They must shun as they would a pestilence that most deadly of all barbarisms that has proclaimed the gibbet of a fanatic to be as glorious as the cross, and that seeks to exalt the religion of Socrates above the religion of Jesus.

They should cling, as to an ark of safety, to their love of country life, to their courtesy, their manliness, their generosity, their hospitality.*

In his intercourse with an unfamiliar world, the Virginian should profit, as Bacon advises the traveller to profit by what he sees and hears in

*If the exercise of hospitality is not as indiscriminating in Virginia now as it was at the beginning of the 18th century, its spirit continues to be not less characteristic of the people.

"The inhabitants," writes Beverley in the early years of the 18th century, "are very courteous to strangers, who need no other recommendation but the being human creatures. A stranger has no more to do, but to enquire upon the road, where any gentleman or good housekeeper lives, and there he may depend upon being received with hospitality. This good nature is so general among their people, that the gentry, when they go abroad, order their principal servant to entertain all visitors, with everything the plantation affords. And the poor planters, who have but one bed, will very often sit up or lie upon a form or couch all night, to make room for a weary traveller to repose himself after his journey.

"If there happens to be a churl, that either out of covetousness or ill nature will not comply with this generous custom, he has a mark of infamy set upon him, and is abhorred by all."

distant lands, so as "to let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts, but only prick in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country."

If the people of Virginia prove true,—as we have every reason to believe they will prove true,—to their remote history, to their recent history, and to themselves, while extending the right hand of welcome to every deserving immigrant from whatever region of the earth he may come, they will so impress upon the plastic mass of immigration the best of all the ancient characteristics of Virginia, that all marks of difference between the old inhabitant and the new settler will quickly disappear, and a race homogeneous in sentiment, if not in origin, shall continue to occupy the soil.

By all alike, whatever is inspiring and ennobling and glorious in the history and traditions of Virginia shall continue to be cherished. All shall draw the spirit of devotion to philosophy and to liberty from the founder of this University. All, without distinction, shall seek to learn eloquence from the lips of Henry, the principles of constitutional government from Madison, the interpretation and exposition of law from Marshall, and serene wisdom and grandeur of soul from Washington. And when the political perplexities of the hour shall vanish, this ancient commonwealth shall resume her appropriate place among her sister

states, strong in a renewed and advancing material prosperity, stronger still in the intelligence, the energy and the virtue of her sons and daughters, and yet radiant with that high renown that rightfully belongs to her as the mother of children whose foremost places are secure among the statesmen, heroes, and founders of the Republic.



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